

Orientation of the Slovak Republic's foreign policy for 2000

In 2000, the Slovak Republic's foreign policy will be based on the government's Policy Statement, which, in its foreign policy section, defines rapid European and Trans-Atlantic integration as priorities. In connection with the integration effort, we intend to continue and deepen co-operation within the Central European region, especially with the V4 countries.

After the EU Helsinki Summit decision to commence accession negotiations with all candidates fulfilling the Copenhagen political criteria and ready to adopt the necessary measures to fulfil the economic criteria, i.e. Bulgaria, Malta, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia, in 2000, Slovakia's priority interest will be to begin talks on concrete negotiation chapters shortly after the commencement of the **Accession Conference** at the ministerial level on 15 February 2000. The reason why Slovakia is interested in opening these negotiations as soon as possible is that accession to the EU together with the other Visegrad group countries remains its strategic goal and we want to ensure that the advantage of the other V4 countries which are already negotiating and Slovakia is trying to catch up with is not increased. Slovakia's priority throughout 2000 will be to open as many chapters as possible in the effort to catch up with the countries with which negotiations started in 1998. These countries will have all chapters open in the 1st half of 2000, which is two years after the negotiations were opened (7-8 chapters opened every semester). Before the official talks, Slovakia is preparing its negotiation positions on 15 chapters as an expression of its readiness to open negotiations on a higher number of chapters than was the case for the 1st group countries. Thus, Slovakia would be given a real chance to catch up with the V4 countries already negotiating in the integration process within the next two years.

In the area of security, Slovakia's entry into NATO remains the priority goal. The Alliance's members' decision on **NATO** expansion will continue to be a political one, and countries aspiring to membership must be ready to assume and thoroughly fulfil all tasks related to membership in the Alliance. Slovakia sees NATO's maintenance of an open door policy as a key attribute of its credibility, efficiency and flexibility, and as a prerequisite for the reinforcement of security in the Euro-Atlantic region. It will be necessary to continue consultations and keep informing NATO and its members of Slovakia's steps in its preparation for membership in the Alliance. From Slovakia's point of view, it will be particularly important to retain USA and V4 support for our ambition to become a member of NATO. It will also be necessary to continue to assist in the stabilisation of the situation in Kosovo, the reconstruction of south-eastern Europe, and peace and security in that part of Europe and, as a result, on the continent as a whole, through participation in KFOR. Emphasis will be placed on the implementation of NP PRENAME. Although it does not represent a direct and automatic road to NATO for Slovakia, since invitations are political decisions, we expect that our progress in our preparation will be the decisive impetus for the necessary political decision in our favour. Ensuring and guaranteeing sufficient financial, material and human resources for the early fulfilment of the set tasks and achievement of fixed parameters needs to be regarded as a priority. Slovakia will continue to actively participate in partner co-operation and consultations within the

framework of the EAPC and reinforced Partnership for Peace. Slovakia continues to be prepared to take part in addressing crisis situations in the world with the framework of UN peace-keeping forces or under NATO command.

Slovakia is prepared to participate in the development of co-operation with the **WEU**, especially in the area of crisis management and Petersberg humanitarian and rescue operations. The Slovak government decided for Slovakia's active and systemic participation in the joint NATO, WEU and EU crisis management exercises (CMX/CRISEX 2000) in the 2000-2004 period. From Slovakia's standpoint, it will be necessary to monitor developments related to building the EU's security capacity and the WEU's integration into the EU as presented at the EU Cologne Summit and, in contacts with the representatives of EU Members States, emphasise Slovakia's interest in retaining an institutional association with the EU of at least the same extent as its associated partnership with the WEU.

In the future, Slovakia's foreign policy activities vis-a-vis the **Council of Europe** (CE) will need to be perceived as one of the important integration elements in view of the CE and EU's increasingly active co-operation and common agenda in the area of the protection of human rights and in the context of the CE's endeavour to influence, within its competencies, certain processes in Europe related to the epicentres of conflicts. The presentation of the Slovak Republic should continue to manifest the ongoing effort to preserve political favour for Slovakia and present Slovakia as a standard European democracy which is contributing to the continent's stability with its internal reforms.

Slovakia will respect and work on the fulfilment of all OSCE commitments, principles and standards adopted so far, in particular those contained in the Charter on European Security and its co-operative security platform and the 1999 Vienna Document. It will pay constant attention to the human rights dimension, take an active part in the programme for the fight against corruption, endeavour to further reinforce its participation in OSCE long-term missions and support the application of further OSCE mechanisms in the prevention of conflicts, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

In 2000, Slovakia will have to especially intensively monitor the area of nuclear disarmament and the ban on chemical weapons, biological weapons and anti-personnel mines. Slovakia is co-ordinating its positions and procedures with other countries participating in the multilateral export control regimes, to which it ascribes great importance in arms control and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The chairmanship of the **Wassenaar Arrangement** (WA) plenary meeting for 2000 was officially given to the Slovak Republic. Another decision important for Slovakia and approved by a WA plenary meeting is that the next WA plenary meeting will take place in Bratislava in December 2000.

In 2000, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to safeguard the fulfilment of the key plans from the Government's Policy Statement in relation to the **United Nations** and other international organisations on the areas of politics, security, economy, social development, economic co-operation, and international law, and in the area of reforming the UN. To achieve the set goals, it is necessary to utilise Slovakia's existing position and membership in executive bodies of international

organisations. Slovakia will continue its traditional sphere of activity at the UN – peace-keeping operations. In 2000, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will concentrate on the thorough preparation of the Slovak delegation to the **Millennium Summit**, which will start on 6 September 2000 in New York. Slovakia will continue to pay attention to the ongoing UN reform and its results. The reform of the UN Security Council will have a special position in this respect. The official opening of the **Bratislava UNIDO/IPS Centre** is planned for 2000. With its orientation, the Bratislava UNIDO Centre, as a part of the world-wide network of UNIDO/IPS centres, will support investment into the industries of developing countries and transforming economies and mobilise the flow of investment from Slovakia to these countries. As a member of the **Danube Commission**, the Slovak Republic will actively support the mobilisation of European and world communities' resources in order to rapidly restore the navigability of the Yugoslav section of the Danube and remove the political obstacles to this process.

A clear priority is to obtain membership in the **OECD** in 2000. For this it is necessary to successfully pass the examinations by CIME/CMIT in April 2000. Subsequently, it will be possible to expect an invitation to become a member at the Council at Ministerial Level in June 2000. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' activities will be focused on ensuring that the examination by CIME/CMIT are successful and that Slovakia "receives an invitation" at the ministerial talks.

Within the framework of **CEFTA**, Slovakia will continue to support CEFTA's conduct as a regional union of an economic nature which also plays the role of a mobilising factor for its member countries in their integration into western European structures from the political point of view.

One priority will be Slovakia's preparation and participation in the CEI summit in Budapest in autumn 2000. Slovakia is interested in reviving economic co-operation, which was the original aim of the CEI. After the adoption of the Stability Pact for south-eastern Europe as a result of the Kosovo crisis, new opportunities are also opening up in this respect. Slovakia is ready to support activities of neighbourly co-operation between CEI member countries and common positions on resolving existing problems in Europe.

In the area of **regional and cross-border co-operation**, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other central bodies will participate in the completion of the legislative and institutional framework for the development of cross-border co-operation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will also participate in the creation of optimal conditions for the use of Phare Cross-Border Co-operation Programme funds.

In connection with Slovakia's ongoing Euro-Atlantic integration, it will be important to maintain Slovakia's regained credibility in 2000. The relationship with EU and NATO countries will remain a bilateral priority. It will also be necessary to work on strengthening the perception of Slovakia as a trustworthy partner next year. In the **USA**, it will be necessary to start a campaign to join NATO with the aim of gaining support, but it is also important to maintain the USA's support for our entry into the OECD. To reach a level of bilateral relations that corresponds with the possibilities and needs of both sides will be a priority in Slovak-**Canadian** relations in 2000. The aim of Slovakia's 2000 foreign policy towards the **Federal Republic of Germany** is

above all to maintain and further intensify German support for Slovakia's efforts to join the EU, NATO and OECD, as well as resolve certain bilateral issues. In view of the **French Republic's** continual growth and the reinforcement of its influence in the current world, it will be perceived as a priority and strategic European partner in our set of foreign policies. Relations with **Great Britain** will require intensification and the resolution of the problem of Great Britain's visa requirement on Slovakia's citizens can not be forgotten. Next year it will be necessary to utilise **Italy's** interest in the central European region. It is necessary to concentrate more effort on achieving wide-spectral dialogue with Italy on all levels with the aim of achieving a position whereby Slovakia is definitively seen as a traditional partner in Italy. The bilateral aspect of relations with **the Vatican** will mainly be determined by the preparation of Basic Treaty between Slovakia and the Vatican as a basis for the gradual codification of relations between the state and Catholic Church in individual areas. Relations with **Portugal** already started to be clearly and positively influenced in 1999, especially by Portugal's forthcoming presidency of the EU and WEU in the first semester of 2000. Negotiations with Slovakia on accession to the EU will commence during the Portuguese presidency. Slovakia will endeavour to acquire Portuguese experience from the pre-accession process more intensively and positively influence the adoption of partial decisions on our country by the EU and EC through the country holding the presidency. **Austria** will continue to be an important partner in Slovak foreign policy next year. Preserving the dynamics of the development of mutual relations is in the interest of both countries. The only issue that can have a negative impact on the further intensive development of our relations is, in view of Austria's anti-nuclear stance, the operation of nuclear power plants in Slovakia. The **Kingdom of Denmark** is the only Scandinavian country to be a member of both the EU and NATO, i.e. the priority organisations of which Slovakia aspires to be a member. This fact will naturally be reflected in the development of our bilateral relations in 2000. In connection with the fact that in the first half of 2001, the **Kingdom of Sweden** will hold the presidency of the EU, we urgently need to intensify Slovak-Swedish co-operation in 2000. As regards the **Kingdom of Norway**, a visit by the Norwegian king and queen to Slovakia and meetings between the prime ministers and speakers of parliaments will be initiated during the year. The intensification of parliamentary co-operation at the level of individual committees is expected. After the activation in 1999 of official contact with the **Republic of Finland**, which had been virtually non-existent since the establishment of Slovakia, the main goal of Slovakia's foreign policy activities is the continuation of the positive trend in the development of mutual contacts and open dialogue between the highest representatives of both countries. In 2000, as in the past, Slovakia's foreign policy will concentrate on the acquisition of lasting support from the **Kingdom of Belgium, Kingdom of the Netherlands** and the **Duchy of Luxembourg** in the implementation of Slovakia's foreign policy priorities, which are accession to the EU, OECD and NATO. In 2000, it will be necessary to increase the frequency of contact with the **Republic of Ireland** and the **Kingdom of Spain**. Bilateral contact with **Turkey** and **Greece** should further intensify in 2000.

Slovakia places key importance on co-operation with the **Czech Republic, Hungary** and **Poland** in the V4 format. The political changes that took place in Slovakia after the 1998 elections enabled a revival of this regional organisation and Slovakia is determined to use the assistance offered for its early integration into western structures. In the area of the foreign policy's multilateral priorities, co-operation within the Euro-Atlantic integration processes, in the issues of Slovakia's entry into

the OECD and on the platform of international organisations will be extended. In view of the changed quality of Slovakia's position vis-a-vis the EU and its inclusion in the group of negotiating countries at the Helsinki Summit, we expect closer co-operation and co-ordination of accession steps, especially in areas that are of the greatest interest to the V4 countries and relevant for maintaining the high standard of co-operation. In 2000, it will be useful and important to continue to intensify relations with other associated countries.

Relations between Slovakia and **Russia**, as well as other **CIS** countries, next year should focus on the balanced development of trade and economic co-operation and corresponding political dialogue. The reduction of the negative foreign trade balance between Slovakia and Russia and repayment of the former USSR's and Russian Federation's debt towards Slovakia will remain a priority.

Slovakia will continue to develop good and fair neighbourly relations with **Ukraine**, which is an important element of the European security architecture, and will support its effort to gradually integrate into the group of democratic and market-oriented European states, including regional and sub-regional organisations, in particular CEFTA.

In relation to Croatia, an increased intensity of contact is expected and in the case that a new president is elected, Slovakia is considering inviting him to visit Slovakia.

It is important to mention relations with the **Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**. In 2000, the development of mutual contact and co-operation between Slovakia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will to a large extent depend on internal developments in Yugoslavia. Slovakia will endeavour to maintain its traditionally good relations with Yugoslavia, but at the same time, it should use every opportunity that the reconstruction process in the Balkans provides, especially in the economic and political areas.

A section of the countries of **Asia, Africa, Latin America** and **Australia** are among the most developed countries, are OECD members, or maintain intensive dialogue with the EU. While respecting Slovakia's long-term priorities aimed at the Euro-Atlantic area and integrating into it, it is necessary to activate and intensify Slovak foreign policy's attitude towards the most important countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa, which represent extensive and relatively absorptive markets or sources of investment and advantageous loans.

In the international law and consular area, in 2000 priority attention will be paid to the creation of contractual conditions for the implementation of the Slovak Republic's foreign policy and securing Slovakia's participation in the preparation of norms by the **UN** and expert organisations within the UN system. This year Slovakia will again actively participate in the talks of the Preparatory Committee on the Establishment of an **International Criminal Court**, complete the ratification process for conventions related to the fight against international terrorism, and fulfil further Foreign Affairs Ministry tasks within the framework of negotiations with the Republic of Hungary on the application of the International Court of Justice ruling on the Gabeikovo-Nagymaros waterworks. If necessary, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will participate

in the preparation of the amendment of the Constitution, particularly in the area related to international law and international treaties.

In the forthcoming year, the Ministry will continue to build the honorary **consular network** in line with the approved concept for the extension of the consular network. It will endeavour to establish honorary consulates where Slovakia does not have effective diplomatic representation, but also in the economic, political, cultural and tourist centres of countries where a representative office has already been established. The Ministry's Consular Department will continue to co-operate in the approximation of Slovak law to EU law and the in-depth analysis of legislation valid in Slovakia in relation to EU law with the aim of precisely defining systemic and factual differences.

As in the preceding period and in accordance with the government's Policy Statement, in the creation and implementation of foreign policy goals in the area of **human rights** and the rights of individuals affiliated with national minorities in 2000, the Slovak Republic will build upon the goals of maintaining the existing high standard of the practical observance of these rights, inter alia, in connection with the fulfilment of tasks necessary for accession to the EU and in view of the area of regional co-operation, bilateral relations and multilateral diplomacy. Activities will also be carried out in specific areas of the protection of human rights and the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

After the transfer of a section of Foreign Affairs Ministry competencies in the area of expatriates to the planned central institutions for Slovak expatriates at the Ministry of Culture, and transfer of the Ministry's competence to grant the Slovak expatriate status to the Ministry of the Interior, the function of directing and co-ordinating the creation of the state's foreign policy in expatriate issues will remain under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this respect, the Ministry will monitor the situation of expatriate communities, with special focus on the situation of Slovak minorities in neighbouring Central European countries, and help to resolve their problems.

In order to support Slovakia's integration efforts and the diplomatic activities of its representative offices in the area of **cultural contacts**, attention will be focused on the co-ordination of the process of creating a contractual base for the development of bilateral contacts on one hand and monitoring, evaluating and facilitating the fulfilment of Slovakia's contractual commitments arising from cultural agreements, implementing plans and programmes of co-operation in the area of culture, education, science, sports and healthcare on the other.

In view of the activities and mission of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the intensification of the systematic effort to present all of Slovakia's foreign policy steps, with a special emphasis on the issues of Slovakia's negotiations with the EU and its association to NATO and the OECD, continue to be priority tasks.

The basic orientation for the **building of the diplomatic service** and personnel policy in 2000 is determined by the priorities of Slovak foreign policy for the forthcoming years. For 2000, it is based on the presumption that the number of staff at Slovak representative offices will be kept at the level of 31.12.1999, both with regard to the total number and the distribution of employees in the diplomatic and administrative/technical employee categories. This means that in 2000 the work on

the fulfilment of foreign policy tasks at Slovak representative offices will be, in the main categories, carried out by 241 diplomats and 173 administrative and technical staff. The process of increasing the qualifications and expert readiness of both the employees of representatives offices and Foreign Affairs Ministry office will continue.